/xiii/ Introduction

101 The Bambara tribes which form part of the Mandé group are at
131 present spread out in French Sudan from the 11th to the 14th degrees latitude north and from the 7th to the 11th degrees longitude west. Three groups which have settled respectively in the circle of Issa Ber, in Kaarta, and in the circle of Odienné are noticeably separated from the central group which occupies the shores of the Niger around Bamako and Ségou.

105 The Bambara live in small villages in the savanna; they practice primarily agriculture (millet, digitaria /Fonio/, rice, maize, etc.), but also herding and gardening. The shore dwellers of the Niger are fishermen and live in symbiotie relationships with the Bozo who taught them fishing techniques and who are generally recognized as the first inhabitants of these regions.

173 The Bambara state that they came from Mandé. This region, where the successive capitals of the ancient kingdom of Mali were situated, has long attracted the attention of research workers (1).

1. See J. Vidal, Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali (ou Melli /on the subject of the Mali site/), pp. 251-268; Le véritable emplacement du Mali /The true site of the Mali/, pp. 606-619. This author designates by Mali I to IV the four villages of Dyélibakoro, Niani, Maninkoura, and Kangaba, which had been successively the royal city. See also Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali /The empires of Mali/, p. 13.

Moreover, it is "the center from which radiated forty-four tribes at present spread out in the area between the Atlantic coast, the Senegal, and the Niger, or to Dahomey" (2). The region indicated above also

2. See D. Zahan. Aperçu sur la pensée théogonique des Dogon /Survey of theogonic thought of the Dogon/, pp. 113-133. This author gives the name of the tribes originating

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[TT8]

in Mandé. See also S. de Ganay, Notes sur la théodicée bambara /Notes on Bambara theodicy/, pp. 212-213. "In the village of Manin Kaba, there exists what is called the manti blo, 'the vestibule of the Mande,' in which are arranged around the object called pembele twelve seats (sigi yoro) representing the forty-four 'races' of this common hearth."

This origin is well known to the Sudanese, but the number of tribes varies. In the course of the septennial ceremony of Kangaba (see p. 15 note 1) the griot say: "We were forty-eight; through the mixture of the winds, the races came out at the four cardinal points" (an tumbi debe ni seki la, siaw bwora fyẽ nyamile seleke nami).

has the name of Dyéliba and used to be /xiv/ called Toubla. The name of Kaba (1) given by all Sudanese to the ancient capital of Mali

1. The word kaba has its origin in ni ya ka ba ko ye "this is astonishing," an expression currently used concerning the sanctuary and the ritual objects it contains. The Dogon, who claim to originate in Mandé and who have dispersed into the cliffs of Bandiagara from agglomerations to which they had given the name Kani, explain this last term by giving it the meaning of "little Ka." These were, in a sense, relay stations between their original habitat and the one they now occupy. Concerning these migrations, see G. Dieterlen, Les Ames des Dogon /The souls of the Dogon/, pp. 9ff.

actually designates the village of Kangaba. But the oldest agglomerations known, before Dyéliba (Mali I according to J. Vidal), are situated in the regions of Kri Koroni and Ouanda.

197 systems of signs and ideograms which may be considered as a sort of
212 writing and the study of which is currently pursued. The system from which all the others supposedly stem, the glã glã zo, has 226 ideograms which, according to informants, summarize the knowledge of the
[802] Bambara (1). On the other hand, the Bamba use a numerical system

1. See. p. 21. This system and two of the ideograms, of which to designates the mash of boiled cereals and by extension nourishment in general, will be the object of a comment by M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. "Signes graphiques des Soudanais. L'Homme. /Graphic signs of the Sudanese man/." Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie et de linguistique, Hermann (in press).

On certain types of writing observed among the Mandé and the Vai, see J. Février, Histoire de l'écriture /The History of Writing/, pp. 528-529.

based on twenty. Moreover, an analysis of the texts collected, some of them quoted in this essay, has brought to light an /xvi/ important number of words which, according to informants, belong to an ancient language of Mandingo origin, now used as liturgical language. It is not within the framework of this essay to present this material or to comment upon it, but it is appropriate to note that the study of this vocabulary would contribute to an understanding of religious thinking among the Bambara.

173 The Bambara have a rather clear idea of their early history and even of their prehistory. They describe their ancestors with precision and know the phases of development of their technology. These premises are necessary to an understanding of their religion which, like the other institutions, is especially linked to this technological development. Moreover, the only observable remains comprise household furniture and utensils, transient but perennial material whose forms and ornamentation indicate the metaphysical principles on which their way of thinking is based.

177 It is appropriate not to neglect those influences which have acted
121 upon the Bambara through their contacts with other Sudanese tribes

Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who

1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 J3 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

551 Bearing a name confers on the bearer the obligation of respecting a taboo (tne or tana). He may neither kill nor, more especially, eat the animal or the plant that represents his name; any infraction of this rule affects his physical and spiritual integrity.

551 602 On the other hand, relationships commonly known as "joking relationships" are established between families respecting different taboos and bearing different names. One of the characteristic aspects of this kind of alliance is the fact that members of one family are in the habit of carrying out purification rites for members of the other in case a taboo is broken.

551 173 Stories relating the origin of family names are well known and there are several versions that have been published for the principal families (1). Some of these bring out not only the history of the head

1. See among others L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, pp. 119ff.

of the family, the first-named, but at the same time the origin of the taboo /75/ attached to the name or the origin of the kinship ties observed by the bearers of the name with members of another family.

In this respect, one of the versions concerning the Kouloubali is most suggestive:

"The Kouloubali are descended from a family called kuludyu which lived in an underground village in a place called kuluba (literally, big mountain) in Mandé. A famine which lasted for fifty-two years hit the region; the people did not know what to do and ate the leaves of trees in order to survive.

Two friends, called Konyo (literally, marriage) and Mbadun (literally, I eat), left their homes and set out on a trip to find food. They met three men and decided to join forces with them in order to escape this painful situation. Upon returning to the village, the newcomers, noticing the excrement of a hyena, joked about its white color: "You have only been eating bones," they said. "But no," laughingly answered the other two, "it is hyena excrement." And they asked their new friends their names, adding that they themselves had none. Then together, they tried to make a fire. One night they noticed a flame apparently coming out of the branches of a kapok tree. The tree grew near a rock and the wind, by making

551 its branch rub against the stone, caused sparks which ignited the kapok.
173 They then rubbed two pieces of wood against each other and managed to light a fire which they kept burning for six months. They jealously guarded their secret; men, some of whom still knew nothing of fire and who were in the habit of drying their meat in the sun, came to ask them for burning coals and gave them millet, salt, and domestic animals in exchange. They also gave them their daughters in marriage. One of the men, who belonged to the Diara family, asked them their family names. They answered that they had none. "What does that matter?" he replied. "You will live on a great mountain and take the name of Kouloubali." They then asked the name of their ally (senãnku). "We have none," said the new men, "but since this famine we have been living with friends."

They then decided to celebrate the marriage of Konyo with Diara's daughter and a new alliance (senãnkuya) was arranged between the two families. Later on, other members of the Diara family came to live with them, and a prosperous village grew up where the Kouloubali lived.

As their numbers had grown, the men decided to go to war to gain other arable lands. They vanquished the Toucouleurs /Tokulor/ of the Ségou region and ended up by taking the town, which they entered as conquerors.

One of the phrases of their device: kulubali kulu dyã tasuma /76/ "Kouloubali of the fire of the great mountain" is a reminder of both their geographical origin and their fortune.

The Device

551 A device, barama, is generally attached to a name and, when pronounced, has the same kind of effective communication (1). Its

1. We refer the reader to the work of Mme. Solange de Ganay, Les Devises des Dogon, in which this important institution has been studied at length and commented upon. The characteristics of Bambara devices are similar. Without taking up the whole problem, it is appropriate here to define the effect of these devices on the person according to the Bambara concept.

782 778 [326] requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

● 773 782 778

1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal boli of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo).
L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

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The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

2: Monteil
173

Bambara FA8

/For information on legendary history see category 116, pages 9, 11-13, 16-21, 23-131, 322-330, 333, 335-336, 340-341, 354-360, 373-376.--Analyst/

794 still -- aside from the fact that this would not appreciably alter the broad lines already indicated -- the present state of our knowledge makes it possible to describe in detail only a few great brotherhoods which are widespread among [270] the Bambara with whom we are here concerned; these are based on cults of Komo, Nama, Kore, and Nya.

The Komo

794 173 The Komo is held in particularly high esteem in the Ségou area. According to the accepted legend, the Komo was brought from Mandé country, where it is supposed to have been introduced by El Hadj Moussa. El Hadj Moussa, having failed to obtain pardon for his sins during a visit to Mecca, turned to the study of magic. He obtained the Komo in exchange for a miraculous shirt (dloki) which some sorcerers had woven for him and which had the faculty of growing longer or shorter at the pleasure of its owner (1).

1. Another example of miraculous cloth, in that case a gift of the marabouts of Djenné, is referred to in the chronicle of Ségou in connection with the installation of Bakari, son of Biton (p.).

El Hadj Moussa is also supposed to have brought a no less miraculous canoe from Mecca, which is still preserved in the greatest secrecy in a swamp in the vicinity of Kouri, near Naréna, in Mandé country.

Finally, he brought back many boli. As he was coming [825] up the Niger, some of them fell into the river and were transformed; the n-tigi (silurids or torpedo fish) is thought to be the result of such a transformation.

According to another legend, the Komo was brought from the Orient, not by El Hadj Moussa but by Fa Koli Sissokho, a follower of El Hadj Moussa.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the Bambara are convinced that the Komo was brought to Ségou from Mandé

794 country and that the Bambara Massa-si, who had fled to
173 Gadiaga, received it, in turn, from one Namori or Nyamori, a former slave who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Koré and who, for that reason, was named Kor-dyuga.

794 Over and above the general characteristics already noted,
778 the Komo has the following peculiarities.

It is said that to make it perfect the boli of the Komo requires the body of a degeni, that is, of a very young boy. Thus, the body of the Komo of Tiguini (20 to 40 kilometers from Ségou) is said to be none other than the body of the grandson [271] of its founder. The same thing is said of the boli of the Komo at Kégué in Bani territory.

This boli-den'-fa is equipped with three iron tubes, and the whole thing is called tama gengen-ba (1). There is a horn

1. The term Komo dyoloro, meaning "chain of the Komo," is used in front of the uninitiated. The wara-da, oracle of the Komo, is called dyoloro samana, "he who drags the chain" of the Komo. In the special language of the cult, "sacrificing to the Komo" is expressed by an bi nege son' (we pay homage to the iron).

at the end of one of these tubes, with an opening serving as a mouthpiece. The sound drawn from this trumpet of sorts by the wara-da announces a meeting of the Komo.

The usual accessories accompany the boli-den'-fa: korti, kana, and siri-kun', which we have already mentioned.

When not in use for ceremonies, all this equipment is
[281] put into baskets similar to those used to transport cotton. The tama-gengen-ba are wrapped in a tiger skin. A hut with a conical roof, similar to the native huts, serves as a temple and holds all the regalia. It is called the Komo-bon' (hut of the Komo).

793 When he is on duty, the wara-da, "oracle" of the Komo,
794 is dressed in a special costume consisting of a mask and a cloak.
778 The mask is surmounted by horns and does not cover the face, but rather is affixed to a stick hidden in the folds of the cloak; it goes up and down at the pleasure of the wara-da, who is completely

614 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),
631

> 2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of or-
128 ganization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

•173 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the
563 two great clans whose history we have given and whose develop-
631 ment and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé
631 and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

173 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute,
631 lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

575 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the
561 clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolosu (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

[1] CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHY AND TRIBAL AND SUBTRIBAL GROUPS

I. Nomenclature

A. European Definitions

101

Monseigneur Bazin, in his Bambara dictionary of 1906, gave us the etymology of Banmana, "men of the cayman," whereas Mani or Mali would mean "those of the hippopotamus," the two names having a totemic origin.

For Élisée Reclus in 1887 (Nouvelle géographie universelle [New Universal Geography], Vol. XII: L'Afrique occidentale [West Africa]), Bamana means "steep crag."

Delafossé (Haut Sénégal-Niger [Upper Senegal and Niger]) in 1923 makes a distinction between Bambara and Banmana.

The Banmana would commonly be called Bambara by Europeans and the other Sudanese. Bambara is the word used in the Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan]. The Moslems designate all non-Moslem Sudanese as Bambara. Thus, the Sénoufo [Senufo] are called Bambara by the Dioula of Sikasso; the non-Moslem Malinké are called Bambara by the Dioula of Odienné; similarly for the Gbanian and Dagari of Upper Volta, etc. That is why Delafosse prefers to name the people of Ségou, Bélédougou, etc., as they name themselves, that is, Banmana, which supposedly means "the refusal of the Master," in allusion to the legend according to which the Banmana left their land of origin (Ouassoulou) at the beginning of the thirteenth century to escape the yoke of the conquering Malinké.

[173]

According to Monteil, Bambara comes from the root Ba, "black."

B. Native Definitions

The Bambara often designate themselves by terms which indicate their geographical distribution.

453 3. discounts negotiable obligations or non-negotiable obligations guaranteed by warrants or receipts for merchandise, by assignment of pending harvests, by bills of lading, by pledges of securities, by deposits of gold and silver ingots, and monies in bullion.

4. participates in loans to the State or Colonies with the provision that, except for special authorization, this participation does not total more than half the reserves.

5. participates in the creation of financial, commercial, and agricultural enterprises in the interest of the country, providing this participation does not amount to more than a quarter of its reserves.

The private banks are:

The National Bank for Commerce and Industry with a branch at Bamako and another at Kayes.

The African Commercial Bank with a branch at Bamako.

These are deposit banks, but the second is also an investment bank.

[44]

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

I. Prehistory

•173 The Bambara have fairly precise notions about their prehistory and their protohistory, and about the history of their ancestors and the evolution of their techniques. Their tradition has them as coming from Mandé, a country whose location remains uncertain for several authors (1), and which even leads Monteil (2) to say: "... in fact

1. J. Vidal, Au sujet de l'emplacement du Mali ou Melli; le véritable emplacement du Mali [Concerning the Location of the Mali or Melli; The True Location of the Mali].

2. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

173 there is no country called Mandé and there never was. Every chief situates its capital wherever seems best to him."

Among these capitals are counted: Kangaba, Miami, Tabou, Diakala, Kounfangué ... For the Bambara, Mandé is the center from which issued the 48 Sudanese populations which spread out following a definite movement (3) to cover the territory included between the

3. S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara" [Notes on Bambara Theodicy]. [Ed., Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Vol. 135 (1949), pp. 187-213.]

Atlantic coast, the Senegal, the Niger, and up to Dahomey. (4)

4. Zahan, Aperçu sur la théogonie dogon [A Look At Dogon Theogony].

[796] The memory of this expansion is still preserved today in the septennial cult which brings all the people to the sanctuary of Kangaba, the Mandé blow (the vestibule of Mandé), under the direction of persons of pure race belonging to the Kéita family. (5) Other

5. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

traditions recognize two centers of expansion: one to the south of Kangaba at Balanzan, the other in the Nioro circle to the south of Goumbou, Waghadou. Intertribal septennial cults commemorate this event.

From our historical point of view, we know very little about the origins of the Bambara.

172 Prehistoric geological strata, still poorly dated, found in the valleys of the Senegal and the Niger show us that these territories were very anciently inhabited. Franz de Zeltner (6) has gathered

6. Fr. Zeltner, "Quelques gisements préhistoriques de la vallée du Sénégal" [Some Prehistoric Strata in the Valley

B. Constitution of the Bambara Kingdoms

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Peul invasion introduced the Bambara into history.

This history, moreover, begins by a legend: two brothers, Baramangolo and Niangolo, coming from Torone, one moon east of Ségou, succeeded in crossing the Niger on the back of a fish, M'Polio (Heterobrancus), which earned them the cognomen of Kouloubali (without pirogue). Baramangolo, who was good, obtained the heritage of the king of Ségou; Niangolo, who was bad (he had killed the fish M'Polio), could not remain in this peaceful country and went further west to wage war against the people of Mali.

Local traditions confirm this legend. Due to the Sudanese anarchy of the seventeenth century caused by the fall of the Songhaï empire (1591), population movements brought Peul horsemen into contact with Bambara outposts in the region of Diénné. The Peuls imposed their suzerainty, organized the anarchic Bambara, and led them to the conquest of the Ségou and Baïko regions, populated chiefly by the Soninké (the traditions suggest that this conquest was a largely peaceful penetration).

Two small kingdoms then established themselves: that of the legendary Baramangolo on the right bank at Ségou, that of Niangolo on the left bank at Sounsana (near Mourdiah). After union with the Soninké was accomplished, the successor of Baramangolo, Kaladian Koulibali (1652-82), had impressive forces at his disposal; he freed himself from the nominal authority of the Moroccan caïds of Diénné, and may even have conducted a victorious attack against Timbuktu. The Bambara star at Ségou dimmed somewhat under his successors, Danfassari (1682-97) and Souma. But in 1712 Souma ceded the throne to the man who was to become the great warrior chief, the Tigi-ton Mamari Koulibali.

For his part, the wicked Niangolo revealed himself to be an adroit politician. uHe married his son Soussa to a Kéita, thus ennobling his family and giving it rights to the ancient Mali empire. Their son Massa was an amiable and adroit monarch who accumulated resources in men and money. His successor, Bénéfali (1710-45), used them well, but his increasing power aroused the distrust of his cousin